



**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF SMART GROWTH
MEMORANDUM**

TO: MEMBERS OF THE STATE PLANNING COMMISSION
FROM: MAURA K. MCMANIMON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DATE: SEPTEMBER 14, 2005
RE: PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

PURPOSE: Staff seeks State Planning Commission approval to:

1. enhance the general description of historic and cultural resources to highlight the importance of preserving the State's historic resources; and
2. amend the State Plan Policy Map to reflect only the historic districts identified in a County cross-acceptance report that are officially listed on the New Jersey or National Registers of Historic Places; historic districts that a County can demonstrate qualifies for and will be submitted for listing on the New Jersey or National Registers of Historic Places; or the historic districts designated in a local zoning ordinance or identified in the historic preservation plan element of the local master plan pursuant to the Municipal Land Use Law; and
3. make recommendations on a case by case basis as to whether the State Plan Policy Map should be amended to reflect historic sites that are identified in a county cross-acceptance report subject to meeting the same requirements as historic districts; and
4. work in partnership with the Department of Environmental Protection's Historic Preservation Office and Office of Natural Heritage and the New Jersey Historic Preservation Trust to maintain consistency in the historic preservation policies of all the agencies.

BACKGROUND:

The State Development and Redevelopment Plan recognizes that the preservation of New Jersey's significant historic and cultural resources benefits the physical, environmental, and economic quality of life.¹ Historical resources are the physical links to our past, provide meaning to the present, and ensure continuity in the

¹ Background highlighting the importance of historic preservation for New Jersey was taken from an article prepared jointly by the Office of State Planning and NJDEP's Historic Preservation Office. The article, [A Historic Preservation Perspective](http://www.nj.gov/dep/hpo/) originally appeared in the Office of State Planning Memo dated April 1996, and reprinted by the State Historic Preservation Office in its current form. The Article can be found on Office of Historic Preservation website at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/hpo/>

future. They are the physical records of significant events and people that shaped New Jersey's history. Historic properties have both economic and cultural value. They provide a sense of continuity with the past, attract visitors, create a sense of civic pride and provide opportunities to enrich the education of our children. The State Plan envisions the development of new communities and revitalization of existing cities and towns in a way that conserves these significant resources. One of the State Plan goals is to "preserve and enhance historic, cultural, open space and recreational lands and structures." The Plan also includes statewide policies for establishing regional, publicly accessible greenways both to preserve historic corridors and to provide passive and active recreational and cultural opportunities. It also encourages the identification, delineation, protection and preservation of scenic corridors.

Identification is fundamental to a comprehensive plan or program designed to protect historic resources. The New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places are the official lists of the historic resources worthy of preservation. Inclusion in the Registers provides benefits and protection for listed resources, and the information generated through the evaluation process contributes to the body of knowledge about historic and prehistoric places in New Jersey. Additionally, the Municipal Land Use Law authorizes municipalities to undertake planning for preservation of historic resources, and adopt master plan elements and zoning ordinances accordingly.

The Preliminary State Plan requested Counties to consider making recommendations to create a clearer distinction between critical environmental sites and historic and cultural sites. Counties generally responded by identifying "historic and cultural sites and districts" on county maps for inclusion into the State Plan Policy Map. Hunterdon County, recognizing the distinction between Historic and Cultural Sites and Park and Natural Areas, recommended that historic and cultural sites reaching a certain size threshold be mapped in all Planning Areas of the State Plan. However, no specific size threshold was provided.

The PDC considered staff's recommendation for mapping only historic districts on the final State Plan Policy Map at the September 7 committee meeting. The PDC agreed, in part, with the recommendation, but requested consideration of mapping historic sites that are significant in size. As with the Counties, the PDC did not decide on a size threshold.

ACTION:

OSG staff's approach to mapping information on the State Plan Policy Map is to be fair, transparent, consistent and balanced (as urged by the Counties and constituent groups commenting on the Cross-acceptance process). OSG also recognizes the purpose of a statewide policy map to bring to the attention of local and county planning officials and the public significant historic areas that should be considered when amending the historic preservation element of a master plan. Based on this approach, staff recommends the following.

- Amend definitions of “historic districts” and “historic sites” in the State Plan to be more consistent with the definitions used by other state agencies whose primary objective is to protect, preserve and promote New Jersey’s historic resources.
- Enhance the general description of historic and cultural resources in the Final State Development and Redevelopment Plan to highlight the importance of preserving the State’s historic resources and make historic preservation an integral part of local and regional planning and decision-making.
- Recommend for agreement historic districts identified in the County cross-acceptance reports if: the historic districts are officially listed on the New Jersey or National Registers of Historic Places; the County can demonstrate a proposed historic district is eligible for and will be submitting for listing on the New Jersey or National Registers of Historic Places; or the historic district is designated in a local zoning ordinance or identified in the historic preservation plan element of the local master plan pursuant to the Municipal Land Use Law.
- Make recommendations on a case by case basis concerning whether historic sites identified in the County cross-acceptance reports should be included on the final State Plan Policy Map subject to the historic sites meeting the same criteria as historic districts.
- Recommend that the Office of Smart Growth review, analyze and report on historic sites identified in the County cross-acceptance reports and those already included on the Preliminary State Plan Policy Map to determine whether a size threshold or any other limitation should be utilized in determining what historic sites, if any, should be identified on the final State Plan Policy Map.
- Work in partnership with the Department of Environmental Protection’s State Historic Preservation Office and Office of New Jersey Heritage to ensure consistency between policies of the State Plan and the policies of those agencies.